



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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PHYSICIAN FORUM ON PERTUSSIS SET FOR JANUARY 26 ***Forum Seeks to Aid Physicians and Others in Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment***

With pertussis (whooping cough) on the rise locally and nationwide, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is taking steps to raise awareness of the problem.

There were more than 300 reported cases of pertussis in San Diego County last year—a level not seen here in many years. Approximately 25 percent of the cases were in infants under the age of 7 months and the second highest total of cases was in children ages 10-14 years. In addition, at least one-fifth of cases were in persons age 30 and older, including a 71- and 72-year-old.

“Cases in older children and adults often go undiagnosed,” said Nancy Bowen, M.D., County Health Officer. “Cases in older individuals may be contributing to the spread of pertussis to infants who are too young to be immunized against it.”

HHSA, in partnership with the San Diego Academy of Family Physicians, is sponsoring a Physicians’ Forum titled, “Pertussis in Adults and Adolescents ...The Hidden Epidemic” 6 - 8 p.m. Thursday, January 26, at the Doubletree Club Hotel in San Diego. The forum is intended to educate and inform local physicians who care for adolescents and adults in the prevention, recognition, diagnosis and treatment of pertussis in their patients. The keynote speaker will be Larry Pickering, M.D., Senior Advisor to the Director of the National Immunization Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“At the forum we’ll discuss two important new weapons in the fight against pertussis,” said Dr. Bowen. “Recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed two new pertussis vaccines for use in the U.S.: one for children and adolescents ages 10 to 18 years and the other for persons 11 to 64 years. These two vaccines, which are becoming more widely available locally, will play a big role in helping interrupt the spread of pertussis to vulnerable populations like infants.”

HHSA and its partners are planning other pertussis educational efforts in the coming year, some aimed at the general public. Physicians seeking more information about the forum can call the County HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the website at www.immunization-sd.org/phy-form-2006.html. For more information about pertussis, other vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization in general go to www.immunization-sd.org.

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